The

THOREAU SOCIETY

BULLETIN

The Thoreau Society, Inc. is an informal gathering of students and followers of Henry David Thoreau. Eugene Walker, Concord, Mass., President; Mrs. Charles MacPherson, Action, Mass., Vice-President; and Walter Harding, State Univ., Geneseo, N. Y., 14454, Secretary-Treasurer. Annual membership $2.00; life membership, $50.00. Address communications to the secretary.

BULLETIN ONE HUNDRED THIRTY-TWO U S I S S N 0040 - 6406 Summer 1975

'WAIT NOT TILL SLAVES PRONOUNCE THE WORD': Thoreau's only anti-slavery poem in the context of Civil War poetry by A. G. Ullyatt

The American Civil War was caused by a complex series of issues. Of these, slavery had been the subject of long and heated debate since 1700, when Samuel Sewall published The Selling of Joseph, the first anti-slavery tract to appear in America. Although it is impossible to say that slavery caused the Civil War, it is probably true to say that slavery did more than anything else to precipitate the military conflict between the Northern and Southern States.

For the North, slavery was a direct violation of democratic republican idealism, the informing philosophy of American government since the Declaration of Independence. The South, on the other hand, could (and did) justify slavery on purely economic grounds, for without slaves, these states faced economic turmoil. Parenthetically, one should note that many prominent Southerners would have been unable to live in the luxury to which they had become accustomed, had slavery been abolished. Thus the conflict between North and South was an ideological one, regardless of the particularities of the ideologies involved. And as is the case with most ideological conflicts, there were a number of writers who actively supported one or other of the causes.

Most poetry published prior to, and during, the turbulent and emotionally charged period between 1861 and 1865 is preoccupied with the slavery question, and has therefore dated. The heat of the moment plays a notable part in dictating the tone of most Civil War poetry, which is characterised by its partisan attitudes, its reliance on declamation and an often empty rhetoric, and its generally poor quality. The debate between Northern and Southern ideologies tended to provoke extreme, sometimes irrational feelings conveyed by melodramatic situations. In their haste to get their virulent words onto paper, poets were inclined to ignore the finer points of technique, so that poor rhymes and plodding metres prevail.

Many nineteenth-century American poets did their utmost to avoid involvement in the vexatious question of slavery with the result that there is surprisingly little worthwhile poetry written in this period. Whittier and Timrod, for example, wrote with conviction and vehemence from the Northern and Southern points of view respectively, while Longfellow, Emerson and Thoreau tried initially to prevent their political persuasions from evincing themselves in their poetry. Eventually, both Emerson and Thoreau became actively involved in anti-slavery campaigns, but only the latter managed to rise above the contentious issues of the period. Thoreau wrote only one anti-slavery poem, yet this single work is probably one of the most significant poems to come out of the Civil War issues.

What is so startling about Thoreau's poem is that it is the work of a man committed to the cause of emancipation. After John Brown's raid on Harper's Ferry in 1859, Thoreau spoke eloquently and movingly on more than one occasion in Brown's defence, and he gave a number of lectures and addresses to anti-slavery meetings. Despite this active involvement, Thoreau reveals nothing of his Northern sympathies in the 44 lines which make up 'Wait not till slaves pronounce the word' [1] for reasons which I hope to show.

Beginning with the epigraph taken from Vergil's Aeneid, 'Spes sibi quisque' (which the poet himself translates as 'Each one his own hope'), Thoreau presents his main thesis in the opening lines. He contends that until all men are free of all forms of bondage, none can call for an end to slavery or for the freedom of others. From the admonition 'Be free yourselves in the first stanza, the poet moves on to a devastating criticism of Americans, in the second. He says of his fellow countrymen:

> Ye are all slaves, ye have your price.

He condemns the herd instinct of the masses and their willingness to submit to the power of money. He implies a concomitant sacrifice of the self in any such submission.

Although at first glance the third stanza seems merely to re-phrase the argument of the first, it actually contains further criticism of the American way of life, and that criticism is all the more telling because of the dexterity with which Thoreau handles the argument:

> Think not the tyrant sits afar
> In your own breasts ye have
> The District of Columbia
> And power to free the Slave.

Thoreau's rational approach somehow inhibits the power of his argument. The affirmation of the individual is implicitly a criticism of government, because there would be no need for a government to formulate laws ensuring freedom for all if freedom enjoyed its right and proper place as a fundamental concern of the individual. To this extent then, this stanza is an indictment of the gap between idealism and reality, between theory and practice in American democracy.

We should also note the subtle way in which the poet gives universality to what appears to be, on the surface at least, an exclusively American matter. When he speaks of 'the Slave', Thoreau means explicitly 'the Negro' in America, but by implication he extends this term to encompass all men, because he believed that all men (or at least, all Americans) were in some form of bondage.

We observe too how assiduously the poet avoids all

references to Northern and Southern factions. It was usual for poets, Northern and Southern alike, to adopt a critical attitude toward their ideological enemies. It is Thoreau's complete aloofness from partisan doctrines which makes his poem unusual and important in the literature of the Civil War period.

Thoreau suggests that by adopting critical attitudes toward their ideological enemies, both the North and the South were losing sight of the real issue: individual freedom. Each faction was its own worst enemy, falling victim to separatism. The North and the South had each created an ideological conformity, and had thereby forced most Americans to choose one or other system of conformity. As one might expect, Thoreau rejects the idea of group conformity because it is an essentially dehumanising thing, depriving the individual of his right to be an individual. Stanza 7 unequivocally states the concept of individualism in these terms:

> He's governed well who rules himself,
> No despot vetoes him,
> There's no defaulter steals his pelf,
> Nor revolution grim.

Thus it is that the poet refuses to be forced into partisan conformity. He chooses neither side because any form of allegiance would necessarily result in the sacrifice of his individuality. Such allegiance would also suggest that the poet was unable to live by the moral dictates of his own conscience, and that is antithetical to Thoreau's Transcendental thinking.

Bearing in mind the prevailing conditions in America at the time, one can appreciate how nonconformist Thoreau's rejection of partisan conformity was. In the essay on 'Self-Reliance', Emerson wrote:

> The populace think that your rejection of popular standards
> is a rejection of all standards, and mere antinomianism...[2]

Far from being a rejection of all standards and 'mere antinomianism', Thoreau's convictions are an affirmation of Transcendental thinking in its political context.

From his nonconformist position, Thoreau asks of his fellow countrymen:

> What is your whole republic worth?

Of course, this is a rhetorical question, for the Civil War itself was the severest test of the efficacy of democratic republican idealism. For a Transcendentalist like Thoreau, however, the war was not a question of conflicting ideologies. but proof positive that the entire American way of life and the tenets on which it was based were suspect. He goes on to accuse Americans of falling for 'vulgar lures', an idea which reinforces the criticisms voiced earlier about Americans having their price.

By the time he reaches the penultimate stanza, Thoreau goes so far as to say:

> 'Tis easier to treat with kings,
> And please our country's foes,
> Than treat with conscience of the things
> Which only conscience knows.

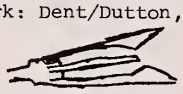
Yet this stanza is closely associated with the line: 'What is your republic worth?' Thoreau suggests that within the space of ninety years, America had gone through several metamorphoses. Before the Declaration of Independence, there were thirteen isolated colonies dominated by the English monarchical system, hence the mention of kings, a subject that still probably had unhappy connotations for many Americans. Then America became an independent country, and within the space of a few more years, had succumbed to civil war.

For Thoreau, these metamorphoses were a confession that individual conscience had consistently failed to exert itself. Everyone had contributed to the precipitation of the war because each had failed to counter the insidious influences of group conformity by asserting the moral principles of his own conscience. Consequently, everybody had tacitly capitulated to the inevitability of 'revolution grim'.

Thoreau's tightly-structured poem makes a singular contribution to the literature of the Civil War period because of the way in which it rises above the immediate socio-political situation which occasioned it. Instead of a virulent polemic on the evils of slavery, we are presented with a perceptive, objective assessment of the fundamental issues. In short, Thoreau offers a rationally-argued, carefully-developed indictment of man's shortsightedness, his susceptibility to conformity, and his willingness to submerge his individuality in the mediocrity of the unthinking masses. Yet these criticisms are not limited by, nor confined to, the special conditions which provoked them. Thoreau's ideas on the nature of freedom and the individual are as pertinent today as when they were first conceived. Men tragically persist in their refusal to accept that each is his own hope, that until everyone is free of all forms of bondage, some forms of slavery must continue to exist. Therein lies the pity--and the hope.

University of South Africa

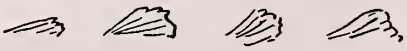
NOTES: [1]Carl Bode, editor, Collected Poems of Henry Thoreau. Baltimore: Johns Hopkins Press, enlarged edition, 1965, pp. 198-199. [2]Emerson's Essays. London/New York: Dent/Dutton, 1955, p. 47. (Everyman's Library)



11-26-50

THOREAU THE ARTIST

For our amusement and we hope yours, in this issue of the bulletin we are using drawings from Thoreau's journals to mark the breaks between articles. We bet in many cases you will have to stretch your imagination to recognize what Thoreau is drawing. If you want to check the correctness of your guesses, simply look up the journal entry for the date indicated in numerals and you will find the answer.



2-13-51

RECENT EVENTS AT WALDEN POND . . . WH

As was announced in the last bulletin, the Massachusetts State Department of Natural Resources took over control of the Walden Pond Reservation from the Middlesex County Commissioners last January and much has happened since then. On the positive side, the site of the cabin has been completely regraded, eliminating all the erosion of recent years, and the ground has been covered with a blanket of oak leaves (a little strange in an area that is mostly pine) to prevent further erosion. Underbrush has been carefully trimmed opening up for the first time in years vistas of the pond from the site. Street-edge parking has been eliminated on both Routes 2 and 126. The barren, gravelly parking area just above the official swimming area has been eliminated and regraded. Parking is permitted now only in two supervised areas to the southeast of the bath house adjacent to Route 126. Part

of Thoreau's beanfield has been replanted once again to pines (as Thoreau himself did in the 1850's).

On the negative side, it now costs one dollar to park a car in the official parking lots, no matter whether you are spending the day swimming or boating or spending a few minutes to visit the cabin site. (Why couldn't a special parking lot with a reduced rate be set up for those who wish to visit the cabin site for a few minutes?) The larger fee cuts down the enormous masses of people who were destroying the pond by their very numbers, but it also eliminates many who want to make only a brief visit of tribute.

What disturbs us even more is that the cairn has been carried off. It seems unbelievable that thus a more than century old tradition has been brought to an end, a tradition that was an absolutely unique tribute to Thoreau. But apparently some bureaucrats decided the pile of rocks didn't look neat enough or might provide ammunition for a rock-throwing contest and so the cairn has gone. We understand via the grapevine that the rocks have been "put in storage," whatever that means. Personally we hope that Thoreauvians will get up on their hind legs and protest until the cairn is brought back.

And a further sad word--violence seems to have come to the pond. In a few short weeks this summer there were three drownings (and only two in the preceding fifty years), a violent assault, and an attempted rape.

7-28-51

A BAS-RELIEF OF THOREAU

Sculptor John Taylor has recently produced an outstanding bas-relief plaster medallion (eight inches in diameter) of Thoreau as a young man. We are proud to have a copy hanging on our office wall and everyone who has seen it has been delighted by it. Copies are available from the sculptor for $5.00 plus $1.25 postage at 113 N. Sherwood, Fort Collins, Colo. 80521.

7-25-51

THE 1975 ANNUAL MEETING

The 35th annual meeting of the Thoreau Society took place in the First Parish of Concord on Thoreau's birthday, July 12. Festivities opened with the usual coffee hour served by the Concord ladies headed by Lucille Needham. The business meeting was called to order at 10:15 by President William L. Howarth. Greetings were brought from the Concord Free Public Library by its director Mrs. Rose Marie Mitten, and from the Thoreau Lyceum by John H. Clymer, its president. The Secretary moved the adoption of the minutes of the 1974 meeting as printed in the Summer, 1974, BULLETIN. The treasurer moved the acceptance of the following report:

Balance on Hand as of June 4, 1974		$4,967.13
Receipts		
Dues	$1,369.00	
Sale of back copies	110.55	
Life memberships	200.00	
Royalties	32.35	
Gifts	1.00	
Sale of Luncheon tickets	476.70	
Reimbursement for postage	109.45	
	$2,299.05	$2,299.05
		$7,266.18
Expenses		
Annual Meeting (including lunch)	$ 999.21	
Postage & Handling	823.36	
Printing	455.94	
Miscellaneous	71.66	
Bernstein Collection	120.80	
	$2,470.97	$2,470.97
Balance on Hand as of June 4, 1975		$4,795.21

He also reported that there was approximately $8,000 on hand in the Hoover fund; $5,000 in the Bernstein fund; and $1,300 in the Save Walden Fund.

A motion made by Albert Bussewitz on behalf of the executive committee was adopted donating $500 to the Society for the Protection of New Hampshire Forests to protect and preserve Mount Monadnock and urging that particular attention be directed towards commemorating Thoreau's fond association with that area.

The president announced his appointment of a committee of Walter Harding, Marcia Moss, and Eugene Walker to investigate and implement the expansion of the Bernstein collection of periodical articles devoted to Thoreau in the society's archives in the Concord Free Public Library.

The meeting was particularly honored by the presence of Professor M. Higashiyama, his wife, and Professor Akiko Tokuza, all of Japan. Professors Higashiyama and Tokuza are officers of the Japan Thoreau Society.

Found among the Bernstein papers were a number of duplicates of a little brochure of Thoreau's letter to Elizabeth Oakes Smith of February 19, 1855, printed by Edwin B. Hill of Ysleta, Texas in 1942. (The original letter is in the Bernstein collection.) A copy of the brochure will be sent to any member of the Thoreau Society requesting it of the secretary and enclosing a self-addressed, stamped envelope.

The nominating committee, chaired by Thomas Blanding, proposed the following slate of officers for terms of one year: Eugene Walker, Concord, Mass., president; W. Stephen Thomas, Rochester, New York, president-elect; Mrs. Charles MacPherson, Acton, Mass., vice-president; and Walter Harding, Geneseo, New York, secretary-treasurer; and for membership on the executive committee for three years: Mrs. Carol Orr, Princeton, New Jersey, and Mrs. Stephen Beaulieu, Holcomb, New York. Since there were no further nominations from the floor, the secretary was instructed to cast a single ballot for the slate and they were declared elected.

The president announced that since Annie Dillard, because of personal circumstances was unable to be present, the speaker of the day would be Professor William Wolf who spoke on "A Mystic, a Transcendentalist, and a Natural Philosopher to Boot." (Mr. Wolf's paper was derived from his recent book on Thoreau's religion. The presidential address, "I have Traveled a Good Deal in Concord" was presented by William Howarth. (Plans for its publication will be announced later.)

After the annual luncheon in the church vestry, the Thoreau quiz was conducted by Roland Robbins. In the afternoon, a rare opportunity was afforded to tour the Thoreau-Alcott House on Main Street, where Thoreau lived the last twelve years of his life and where he died, thanks to the new owners, Dr. & Mrs. Paul Dinsmore. Members were also given the opportunity to visit the Fruitlands Museum in Harvard, Mass., site of Bronson Alcott's short-lived Transcendental community experiment, and where a number of Thoreau manuscripts and memorabilia are housed, through the courtesy of the director William Henry Harrison. Rev. Dana McLean Greeley conducted the afternoon discussion session on the topic "Can We Recover

the Simple Life?" Robert Needham led his annual tour of Sleepy Hollow Cemetery. And Marcia Moss, the society's archivist, conducted a special tour of the Concord Free Public Library and the society's archives.

The annual box picnic supper and sherry party sponsored by the Thoreau Lyceum was forced inside because of rain. It was followed by a special showing of the BBC TV film on Thoreau, "One World at a Time," starring Eric Porter, arranged by the Thoreau Lyceum and the Concord Players. The meeting came to a close with the presentation of the gavel to the new president, Eugene Walker, by the outgoing president, William Howarth.

On Friday night preceding the meeting, the Thoreau Lyceum sponsored a lecture by Prof. George Hendrick on the newly discovered Dr. Samuel Arthur Jones papers on Thoreau in Urbana, Illinois.

4-10-52

MELVIN; FRIEND OF THOREAU by Mary Gail Fenn

Journal readers who have followed Henry Thoreau's riparial excursions are familiar with George Melvin and his black spotted hound who spent a good part of their lives muskrat hunting along the river. One of the men of Concord in whom Thoreau took delight, Melvin lived on the edge of town as he lived on the edge of society. Hiring himself out as a day laborer, he incurred the annoyance of his employer by taking his gun to work and shooting game in the fields, much to the detriment of his appointed chores. "A trial to his mother", he represented the untamed man, which, of course, was his attraction to Thoreau.

One of the most familiar of Thoreau's Melvin sagas is that of the azalea nudiflora; how Thoreau saw a sprig of the pink blossoms in town and, as was his custom, painstakingly tracked them down until his quest brought him to Melvin's door. Cagey Melvin made the most of his secret but probably knew that Thoreau would get the location out of him, as indeed he did. Being a botanist he should know these things, explained Thoreau as he followed Melvin and his dog down the brook and was ferried across the Assabet River to where the bushes grew, and still grow and blossom today.

One sometimes wonders what became of the characters we meet in the pages of Thoreau's writings. Fortunately, a diary that was recently presented to the Concord Public Library answers that question in respect to Melvin. In the 1860's, Frederic Hudson lived across the street from the Thoreaus. His house was built near the site of Channing's house, which Hudson had had moved further up the road. He and his invalid wife took Mrs. Thoreau and Sophia with them on sleigh and carriage rides. Mrs. Thoreau sent in Christmas buns to the Hudsons and Sophia loaned them her books on horticulture. In Frederic Hudson's diary for March 21, 1868 he writes, "Jonas Melvin and William Buttrick came to the river bank this morning in search of the body of George Melvin. His dog reached home last night without his master. Search was begun this morning when his boat, bottom up, and several things belonging to him were found. Search was renewed by Francis Munroe, Humphrey Buttrick, Mr. Reynolds and others. His cap was found and about 10 A.M. his body was discovered in about 8 feet of water. It was towed ashore. When I went to school in 1829 or 1830 George Melvin worked on Stedman Buttrick's farm where I boarded. Later, Hudson added, "Wednesday, April 1, 1868. Attended the funeral of George Melvin, the Leather Stocking of Concord. He was a rough original, full of love of nature, a great sportsman in the muskrat, woodchuck line; was considered the best graftsman in town."

Probably had Thoreau been alive he would have taken notice of this event in his Journal for as he recorded his Uncle Charles' life as one bounded by snowstorms, he would be quick to point out that Melvin's was a life dominated by the river; he lived on it and he died on it.

7-25-51

OUR PRESIDENT: EUGENE WALKER by Mary Fenn

Eugene Hoffman Walker was born in New York City in 1915. He now lives in Concord with his wife Mary, and three children; Arthur who is in nurses' training, Cynthia a recent Smith graduate who is on the office staff of the mathematics department of Boston University, and Pamela who is a third year student at Vassar.

Walker is a graduate of Harvard where he received his B.A., his M.A., and his Ph.D. His professional life has been in the fields of geology and hydrology. He was a miner in Bisbee Arizona, a geologist for the Shell Oil Company in Texas, a laboratory instructor in the geology department at Harvard, a geologist in Bolivia, instructor at the University of Michigan, and geologist for the U. S. water resources survey in Kentucky, Iowa, Idaho, and Massachusetts. He has been recently making studies in cooperation with the Massachusetts Department of Natural Resources in the Charles River Basin, the Connecticut River valley, and Nantucket Island. He has written various articles on local natural history, including one for Massachusetts Audubon explaining the rise and fall of the water level at Walden Pond.

Walker is very much a part of Concord, serving as president of Friends of the Concord Free Library, a member of the board of the Concord Lyceum, and a member of the choir of Trinity Church. One would wonder how he found any spare time, but trust a busy man to do so. His many hobbies include hiking, bicycling, bird-landscape-tree-buterfly and of course rock-watching. He belongs to may conservation, historical, and professional associations, including Audubon and the Appalachian Mountain Club.

11-26-5C

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6-3-51

CURRENT THOREAU LITERATURE ..... WH

Outstanding Thoreau publication of the quarter is unquestionably the Sierra Club printing of Herbert Gleason's THOREAU COUNTRY in huge exhibit format (10" x 14") with absolutely glorious reproduction of more than one hundred of Gleason's black and white photographs taken in the first three decades of this century and accompanied by appropriate selections from Thoreau's journals. At long last Gleason is winning the recognition he has so long deserved and this volume is the gem of the various printings of his photographs in the past few years. It is expensive ($9.95 for the paperback edition) but well worth it . . . . Kenneth Cameron'- TRANSCENDENTAL LOG is another of his huge compilations of reproductions of 19th century newspaper clippings and scattered through them are many interesting and forgotten bits of Thoreauviana . . . D. G. Deshmukh's THOREAU AND INDIAN THOUGHT is, so far as we know, India's first doctoral dissertation on Thoreau and a very good job it does of studying "the impact of Indian thought on the life and writings" of Thoreau. ... Walter Harding's "Thoreau in Jail" brings to light the fact that Thoreau's arrest for not paying his poll tax was illegal; the penalty called for by the statute books was seizure of his property ... Lorraine Kasyan's "The Philosopher's Accounts" is, of all things, an accountant's view of Thoreau's WALDEN accounts -- with some rather interesting reactions .... Donald Koster's TRANSCENDENTALISM IN AMERICA is probably the best of the recent rash of books about the movement. It is a good general survey of the literature and scholarship of the movement, though not particularly profound. Its bibliography is not all it could be .... We must confess William Randel's "Walden" cassette is somewhat of a disappointment. While it covered the book and its significance fairly well, it seemed to lack enthusiasm .... Richard Schneider's "Reflections in Walden Pond" is a highly technical analysis of Thoreau's abiding interest in optical phenomena .... Critics have frequently pointed out that Thoreau's prose is often more poetic than his verse. Now, in ALL NATURE IS MY BRIDE, William M. White has created a volume of Thoreau's prose poetry by gathering together a hundred or more short poetic passages from Thoreau's journals, most of them only three or four sentences long, and set them up on the page as free verse. This is not the first time this has been done; it is however the most successful and those who rejoice in the poetry of Thoreau's prose will revel in it. It should however be taken in small doses; like caviar, it is a rich diet. And there are those of us who will still prefer taking the journals whole as a steady diet. .... Dean Flower's anthology includes all of WALDEN plus selections from the travel books, essays, letters, journals, and poems. It is a good representative selection and the introduction is crisp, solid, and unsentimental as it should be. But on the negative side the texts are based on badly outdated printings and $2.50 seems an exorbitant price for a wood-pulp paperback .... Although personally I feel studies of imagery in Thoreau are often overdone, their point often over-emphasized, Richard Turerk's CENTRAL STILL: CIRCLE AND SPHERE IN THOREAU'S PROSE at least makes its point clearly and explicitly, but I would have found it more interesting were it half the length. Incidentally he, like Charles Anderson from whom perhaps he copied the error, should learn that a nighthawk is not a true hawk and thus at least one point in his argument is not valid .... Several members have written to point out how much they have enjoyed Elizabeth Von Vogt's "Thoreau's Travels through Time" which shows how she used reading Thoreau as a touchstone to make her travels more meaningful. .... Thomas Woodson's "Thoreau's Excursion ..." is the most thoroughly researched account we have of his brief excursion to the Berkshires and Catskills in 1844. ... The Gundeliveens' "Henry D. Thoreau et son Actualitie" takes almost the entire issue of the magazine with quotations from Thoreau's works, commentary, and many illustrations.

11-26-50

THE 1860 CONCORD CATTLE-SHOW: AN OFFICIAL ACCOUNT
by Walter Hesford

In 1860, Henry Thoreau delivered the main address at the annual Middlesex Agricultural Society cattle-show, held, as usual, in Concord. Levi Stockbridge attended this show as a delegate from the Massachusetts Board of Agriculture, which allocated funds for the cash premiums awarded at county fairs throughout the state, and so wanted to make sure that they came up to snuff. Stockbridge's assessment of the 1860 Concord fair, published in the yearly report of the Board, was rather low. The exhibits were not, on the whole, of high quality, and attendance was down from previous years. Stockbridge did not, however, recommend that the state withdraw its support.

There were extenuating circumstances. Poor weather was one, competition another. Concord was no longer the sole power of western Middlesex. Framingham to the south, and Lowell to the north held their own shows. Lowell especially, with its booming cotton industry, threatened to cast the old county center

into the minor role of a backwater community, and threatened to make the agricultural pursuits of this community appear relatively insignificant. Perhaps this is why Stockbridge takes pains to point out that husbandry is still a major and worthy regional activity.

Stockbridge concludes with an account of a drunken brawl that erupted "on the grounds of the society". Such episodes may have been frequent at an event that attracted "the refuse of society". Though cattle-shows were originally sponsored for high-minded social, political, and educational purposes, by Thoreau's time they offered amusements and enticements equivalent to those found on a modern midway. Thoreau could enjoy the spectacle of country folk, especially country boys, enjoying thoroughly unedifying offerings, yet there is discouragement as well as wit in his final words to the assembled Middlesex farmers, "Surely, men love darkness rather than light".

It is interesting that Stockbridge claims that Thoreau "showed clearly", among other things, "the necessity of rotation of crops". As far as I can see, there is not a hint of this practical application in his address, "The Succession of Forest Trees", though there are hints of applications far more significant.

Union College

Mr. Stockbridge's Report from Eighth Annual Report of the Secretary of the Massachusetts Board of Agriculture. (Boston: White, 1861 276-8):

As a delegate from the State Board of Agriculture, I attended the sixty-eighth annual exhibition of the Middlesex Society, holden at Concord, on the 20th of September. And although I was pleased and highly entertained by some portions of the show, I was not, as a whole, very favorably impressed by it. Fears of the cattle scourge prevented the exhibition of neat stock, and the horses, though respectable in numbers, looked mean, and I doubt not looked as they felt, for being compelled to exhibit themselves in a pouring rain. In the department of breeding mares and colts the show was good, indicating that the members of the society are interested and successful in this branch of stock raising. A ploughing match by seven competitors, was entered into with spirit, and excellent work performed in spite of the weather; but spectators seemed to prefer shelter from the storm, rather than the excitement and instruction of the trial, and a thorough drenching. A majority of the instruments used were the Michigan double plough, and I conclude by it, that deep, thorough pulverizing of the soil, is a cardinal doctrine of the farmers of Middlesex. Of swine there were but two entries; but two animals on the ground, and these not for breeding purposes, but for the butcher. Sheep there were none, but poultry were respectable in numbers, and excellent in quality. I noticed some most beautiful geese of the Bremen variety.

In the department of mechanics the show was meagre. The cash sheet of the society showed that the number of spectators on the ground was small compared with former years. But the inclement weather drove them to the hall, which was full to overflowing, not only with spectators, but with fruit and grain, vegetables, bread, butter, cheese, and specimens of the handiwork of the industrious women of the society, in both the ornamental and useful line. The exhibition of flowers and fruits was of a high order, especially in the department of apples and grapes. The weather, though injurious to the interest of the society, was treated as a capital joke; the greatest good feeling and hilarity prevailed. The occasion was enlivened by Gilmore's brass band, that gave snatches of melody in the open air during the occasional gleams of sunshine, but who, unlike the ploughmen, made a precipitate retreat to the hall when the rain clouds swept by. The society had no public dinner, but listened in large numbers and with apparent interest and satisfaction to an excellent address from one of the citizens of Concord, Mr. Thoreau. The address was an answer to the question, "Why, when a pine forest is cut down, does a hard wood forest take its place?" In answering this, the speaker showed clearly the necessity of rotation of crops, the great vitality of seeds under favorable circumstances, and the means nature had provided for scattering and planting the seeds of trees and plants. President Felton, of Harvard College, made a pithy speech, contrasting the customs and methods of farming in the olden time with those of the present day, and urged a higher culture as the means of still greater advancement. Hon. Charles Hudson, of Lexington, spoke of the value and importance of agriculture to the State, and urged the necessity of its being fostered and encouraged.

At the conclusion of these exercises, the annual meeting of the society was holden; a new board of officers elected, the report of the treasurer, showing the financial affairs of the society to be prosperous, was presented and accepted, and the awards of the various examining committees made known.

As has been already intimated, the show of the Middlesex Society did not, as a whole, realize my expectations; but the State bounty has not been by any means misapplied or wasted. The partial failure was owing to causes over which the officers or members had no control. Rainy days, or years of pleuro-pneumonia, may again occur, but the beneficial stimulus of the State money will be seen, as this season, in the encouragement it gives to those branches of agriculture that require the year for illustration rather than the day of exhibition. This society is much more limited at the present time, in its field of operations, than during the years of its early history. The incorporation of the Middlesex North, at Lowell, and South, at Framingham, have somewhat localized it to the middle of the county, but its premium list is open to competitors within the county limits, and numbers avail themselves of the privilege. Middlesex County is one of the best, if not the best county in the State, for successful, prosperous husbandry. Its large manufacturing and mercantile population make it a perfect beehive. Consumers greatly outnumber producers, and the home market, which demands all the products of the soil at highly remunerative prices, encourages the farmers to exertions to meet the call. As a consequence, the lucrative business of market gardening is largely engaged in. Of roots and esculent vegetables, this county, according to the statistics of 1855, raises more than all the other counties of the State, and it is entitled to the appellation of the garden of Massachusetts.

In closing this report, I wish to call the attention of the Board to a transaction that occurred on the grounds of this society, near the closing hours of its last exhibition. An intoxicated Irishman, in a fit of drunken frenzy, with a dangerous weapon stabbed two men severely, and, as was feared at the time, fatally. For this occurrence the officers or members of the society were not culpable. General good order prevailed, and the offenders in this brawl were promptly arrested. It is a question whether our societies are sufficiently guarded and empowered by legislation, to protect themselves from scenes of a similar character. We desire these annual exhibitions to be holidays to the entire community; but good order, sobriety, and decorum should be the law of conduct. We wish our families, our wives and children to attend them; and it is imperative that they should not be made thereby the witnesses of scenes that shock the finer sensibilities, or be brought in contact with any thing contaminating to purity and morality. At such large gatherings the refuse of society are prone to congregate, with no laudable object in view, and the officers of the societies should have legal powers to prevent all drunkenness and debauchery, wantonness or rioting, on or about their exhibition grounds. If the laws are already sufficient, they should be enforced with promptness and energy; if not, we should forthwith seek the enactment of such as will accomplish the desired end.

I am indebted to the following for information used in this bulletin: M.Ames,T.Bailey,T.Balaam,L.Beaulieu, W.Bly,M.Bodfish,W.Botorff,G.Boudreau,A.Butler,M.Campbell,A.Chase,S.Davidson,J.Donovan,R.Epler,R.Fleck,V. Friesen,R.Ganley,H.Gottschalk,G.Hasenauer,C.Hoagland, W.Howarth,P.Huber,D.Kamen-Kaye,K.Kasegawa,A.Kovar,N. Lester,T.Manabridge,M.Manning,W.Moiles,J.Moldenhauer,J.Myerson,T.O'Donnell,E.Oliver,C.Orr,G.Paphdem, R.Schaedle,E.Schofield,A.Seaburg,E.Shaw,A.Small,R. Stowell,J.Vickers,D.Watt,A.Weitkamp,S.Wellman,W.White, B.Witherell. Please keep the secretary informed of items he has missed and new ones as they appear.

NOTES AND QUERIES

One of the special pleasures of visiting Concord this summer was the weekly presentation of Christopher Childs' "Clear Sky, Pure Light: An Evening with Henry David Thoreau," a recreation of scenes from Thoreau's life based on his letters, journals and other writings. We understand that it is going on a tour of colleges this fall and we highly recommend it.

A cartoon in the WALL STREET JOURNAL for April 1, 1975, shows a couple conversing on the porch of a luxurious new house and one saying to the other, "Yes, sir--Thoreau had the right idea."

Harold Oliver, assistant professor of music at the State University College at Geneseo, New York, has composed "Walden: A Cantata for Women's Chorus, piano & percussion (large gong, chimes & one Temple Block)" and conducted its first perforance there recently.

The Friends of the Wellfleet Libraries on Cape Cod are now selling notepaper with a drawing of Thoreau's Wellfleet Oysterman's house.

Thomas Balaam of Airlie Beach, Q., Australia, writes us that John Eliot, the 17th century Massachusetts missionary to the Indians, grew up within 15 miles of both King's Walden and St. Paul's Walden in England and so wonders if he possibly had anything to do with the naming of the Concord pond.

The official COMMEMORATIVE GUIDE TO THE MASSACHUSETTS BICENTENNIAL features a photograph of Thoreau labeled "Ralph Waldo Emerson". (p. 69)

The United States Information Service is currently distributing in foreign countries a pamphlet entitled GALLERY OF AMERICANS "representative Americans who have achieved distinction in their respective fields of endeavor," featuring Thoreau along with 50 others.

Goodspeed's of Boston is currently offering Thoreau's initialed copy of the July, 1842, DIAL for $1000 and James T. Fields' copy of Thoreau's WEEK with an unpublished Thoreau letter laid in for $2,500.

In the syndicated "Benjy" cartoon strip by Jim Berry for March 31, 1975, Benjy after having his nap in the park disturbed by the noise of jack-hammers, motorcycles, and powermowers, says, "Oh, for the days of Thoreau when the majority of men led lives of QUIET desperation."

One of the Unitarian-Universalist Service Committee's 1976 Christmas cards features Thoreau's "Perhaps what moves us in winter is some reminiscence of far off summer ..."

Thoreau's copy of P. Virgilii Maronis--Opera (Philadelphia: Small, 1817) has recently been acquired by the Ralph Waldo Emerson Room of the Minneapolis Public Library.

Strange Coincidence Department. Mrs. Sally Dunbar of Park Ridge, Illinois, who is related to Thoreau's mother's family, writes us that when she visited the ancestral home town of Dunbar, Scotland, she discovered that the daughter of George Home, Earl of Dunbar, one of the family ancestors, married a Lord Walden on January 29, 1611!

As part of the Bicentennial Celebration a multimedia presentation entitled "The Concord Conscience" was presented daily in Concord this past summer. Nearly a third of it was devoted to Thoreau.

Thoreau found it very relaxing
To chat while the woodman was axing,
But the townsmen quite bored him
And so he ignored 'em.
They were all like Sam Staples--too taxing.
--Laraine Fergenson

Did Henry love Edmund or Ellen?
John knew, but he's surely not tellin'.
So critics may feud
In their articles lewd,
But it's something I'd rather not dwell on.
--Lauraine Fergenson

The Current Co. of Bristol, R.I. is offering a rent receipt in Thoreau's hand (for his aunt's house) for sale for $625. The year's rent was $20.

Found among the Daniel Bernstein papers as they were being prepared for the Thoreau Society Archives were a number of copies of the little E.B.Hill brochure printing of Thoreau's letter to Elizabeth Oakes Smith of February 19, 1855 (the manuscript of which is in the Bernstein Collection). A copy of this brochure will be sent to any society member who sends in a self-addressed stamped envelope, so long as the supply lasts.

New life members of the Thoreau Society are Makoto Rokugawa of Nagano City, Japan; Jenny Oremland of Walpole, Mass., and Carter Foulds of Annandale, Va. Life membership is fifty dollars.

In a new housing development called Walden near Minneapolis, residents are forbidden to leave their garage doors open. Can we expect some civil disobedience?

A cartoon by Wm. Hamilton in the WASHINGTON POST for July 18, 1975, gives a cocktail party remark, "Sometimes when I read 'National Geographic', I just want to pull a Thoreau".

Egbert Oliver points out to us that Gene Stratton Porter's long ago popular novel, HARVESTER (1911) has as its dedication, "This portion of the life of a man of today is offered in the hope that in cleanliness, poetic temperament and mental force, a likeness will be seen to Henry David Thoreau."

Berkeley Farms in Oakland, California, feature the "If one advances confidently in the direction of his dreams" quotation from WALDEN on their milk cartons.

THE NEW YORKER, after quoting from Taylor Caldwell's novel TENDER VICTORY, "What do the Chinese say? 'Each man lives a life of quiet desperation,'" adds, "That was old Hop Sing Thoreau, Doc."

B. Altman & Co., the New York department store, advertises a new collection of men's clothes "designed for the man who, as Thoreau said, "hears a different drummer." But the accompanying illustration shows a yellow imported English sweater, a madras shirt, and pink and blue plaid trousers, none of which seem to be made of homespun.

A pornographic homosexual film now being advertised in New York City is entitled "A Different Drummer."

Dept. of Faulty Vision: "Of one thing we may be reasonably sure, viz., that when the genuine geniuses of this period shall be appreciated at their full value, and the names we have rehearsed [Longfellow and Bryant] shall have become classic, their countrymen will have ceased discussing Poe and Thoreau and Walt Whitman."--J. G. Holland, Every-day Topics: Second Series. New York: Scribner, 1882, p. 126.

A music group named the Henry David Thoreau Memorial String Band is giving concerts in Upstate N.Y. currently.